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STATE FOR WHA KMADISON, WHA/CAR JTILGHMAN, MFORTIN,
KWILLIAMS, VDEPIRRO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/21/2017

TAGS: PREL EAID PHUM JM
SUBJECT: JAMAICA WILL NOT ACCEPT DEPORTEE REINTEGRATION
PROGRAM

REF: A. (A) KINGSTON 1606
 1B. (B) KINGSTON 1657
 1C. (C) KINGSTON 1770

Classified By: Classified by CDA James T. Heg for Reasons 1.5 B&D

11. Summary: (SBU) On December 20, the Jamaican Prime Minister rejected the U.S. offer of assistance for returning deportees through the pilot Deportee Reintegration Program. This decision was based on adherence to a reported collective decision by CARICOM Heads of Government to discuss the program with the U.S. on a regional basis; and came despite heavy lobbying of the Prime Minister and his staff by both Ambassador Johnson and the CDA. As the decision came from Golding, Post sees no other option left to the Department but reassignment of the funds that would have been used for Jamaica to another CARICOM partner nation. End Summary

Another attempt to sway Minister of National Security

Washington to engage in discussions with the Department of State Office of Caribbean Affairs concerning program implementation.

We are aware that you feel certain CARICOM equities are at risk if you agree to proceed, and that these Jamaican concerns are abetted by some individuals within CARICOM. The Ambassador indicated that you were told CARICOM proposes to hold a meeting with the U.S. in January to discuss the deportee program.

In connection with this, it is important that your government understand several key things:

--The U.S. has not nor will it propose a CARICOM-wide program. Rather, based upon the final communiqui signed by the U.S. and CARICOM heads of state at the Conference on the Caribbean in Washington, D.C. this summer, it has tabled an offer to conduct pilot programs in three countries receiving the most deportees from the U.S. Those countries are Jamaica, Guyana, and the Bahamas.

--The governments of both Guyana and Bahamas have indicated their intention to proceed with the program, without any objection, reservation, or condition related to CARICOM. Those countries are proceeding to work with IOM on a program that best meets their local requirements.

--The U.S. does not intend to meet with or negotiate with CARICOM concerning this program, which is bilateral from the point of view of the benefiting countries. There will be no meeting between CARICOM and the U.S. government on

this subject, either in January or at any other time.

--The program does not entail any proposed or anticipated increase in the flow of deportees from the U.S. to Jamaica.

--Absent a positive decision by Jamaica to proceed with this program by the end of this week, the U.S. government will initiate a reprogramming of the portion of the program intended to benefit Jamaica to another country in the region. We would greatly regret this outcome, as the program is solely meant to benefit your country in a way you would find most appropriate to your needs, and is intended to meet a long-stated concern of Jamaica's about the resource cost to resettling returning deportees.

¶6. (SBU) Sinclair contacted the CDA upon receipt of the fax transmission and promised to take the message to Golding. In their tel-con the CDA stressed the need for Jamaica to make a decision and pointed out that at this late stage, continued silence would be considered a no.

One more time.....

In a meeting with the President and Secretary of State had with the Heads in June, the issue was addressed with the understanding that there would be further dialogue on reintegration issues. At the congressional hearings which followed in July, the United States put forward the option of the IOM project currently underway in Haiti being extended to other CARICOM countries.

The CARICOM response conveyed through the Caucus of Ambassadors in Washington was that the experience of the IOM project in Haiti would need to be evaluated to determine whether it is appropriate for the circumstances of other countries in the region. This position was reiterated during informal discussions between your Embassy officials and the Ministry of National Security in August.

I am advised that a contract was entered into between the State Department and the IOM for project implementation in the Bahamas, Guyana and Jamaica. I must indicate that this has caused some embarrassment to the government and has made it necessary for us to formally advise the Chairman of the Regional Court of Security Ministers that Jamaica had not withdrawn from the position previously taken by the Heads.

I must therefore advise that Jamaica cannot accede to your proposal for a bilateral arrangement outside of the regional framework that CARICOM Heads have mandated.

Yours sincerely

Bruce Golding
Prime Minister

¶9. (C) Comment: We have pulled out all the stops to induce the GOJ to accept our deportee program. That in the end they have not done so is a significant disappointment. This has been a dialogue of the deaf throughout the fall. Our efforts to engage the Jamaicans bilaterally have foundered on their insistence that they are bound by a CARICOM consensus to treat the issue from a regional perspective. In this Mission, we have no insights on or access to CARICOM internal processes and deliberations, and so have only been able to try and counter their CARICOM-related concerns by repeating our own position over and over at ever-higher levels.

¶10. (C) Whatever their representations to us, CARICOM officials and those of several other member states appear to have worked assiduously behind the scenes to persuade the GOJ not to break ranks on this issue. We are even told here that Guyana, despite its cooperation with us to date on the IOM program, has indicated to the GOJ it is not

going ahead with a bilateral deportee program. The Jamaican permanent bureaucracy, which dug in early on against the U.S. proposal, must assume a significant share of the blame here.

¶11. (C) From our point of view, it was unfortunate that this bilateral program proposal was first introduced in a U.S.-CARICOM context, as that has allowed that organization to make mischief over it ever since. The new JLP government here, having inherited a reputation from the Edward Seaga days as "not a team player" on CARICOM integration, (Ref A) has evidently felt it necessary to counter that reputation in the region by being overly sensitive to the concerns of CARICOM. Whatever our opinion of the importance of CARICOM, the GOJ's concerns were clearly genuine and their position resulted from deliberation at the highest levels. Overwhelmed by problems of forming a new government after 18 years out of power, surging crime and economic turmoil, exacerbated by the effects of Hurricane Dean and heavy fall rains, the Golding administration was never able to cut through the cloudy issues raised by the permanent bureaucracy and CARICOM to see the larger picture. If and when we succeed in engaging another CARICOM member in a bilateral deportee program in lieu of Jamaica, the GOJ may learn a valuable lesson about CARICOM's utility.

¶12. (C) We do not believe Golding's decision reflects a change from his essentially pro-U.S. orientation. Nor does it reflect opposition to our proposal per se. Rather, concerns about their position in the region which have not been addressed, combined with our insistence on a yes or no answer before Christmas, backed him into a corner. The Ambassador will raise this unfortunate matter with the new Jamaican Ambassador-designee, Anthony Johnson, in a

courtesy call scheduled for December 27, and urge him to take steps to improve bilateral communication and understanding on issues such as this as soon as possible. We would also recommend greater bilateral engagement by senior WHA officials with the new Golding government early in the new year. We have important security interest here (DHS and perhaps DOJ are planning to increase their presence in Jamaica). Despite this unfortunate fumble, we should support Golding's overall goals for strengthening democratic institutions, fostering market-based economic growth, and combating crime and corruption.

JOHNSON